WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1. A method for background adjustment, the method comprising:
 - a) estimating a background lightness level in an original image;
 - b) converting pixels in the original image to a luminance-chrominance color space, wherein pixels having lightness levels substantially equal to the background lightness level are mapped as background pixels such that their lightness values are set substantially equal to a value corresponding to white;
 - c) comparing chroma values for the background pixels to at least one threshold;
 - d) adjusting lightness levels for any background pixels having chroma values above a first threshold to a new lightness level, producing lightness adjusted pixels;
 - e) removing chroma from any background pixels having chroma values below a second threshold, producing color adjusted pixels; and
 - f) converting to a color space of an output device, wherein conversion is performed on all pixels including any lightness adjusted pixels and color-adjusted pixels.
- 2. The method of claim 1, wherein estimating a background lightness level further comprises building histograms of each line of the original image and then determining a high peak value in the histograms.
- 3. The method of claim 2, wherein determining a high peak value in the histograms further comprises using a minimum white to determine if the high peak value is used in estimating overall background lightness level.
- 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the first and second thresholds are substantially equal to 20 for text mode, and 10 for all other modes.
- 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the value corresponding to white is 255
- 6. The method of claim 5, wherein the new lightness level is substantially equal to 254.
- 7. The method of claim 1 wherein color is removed from a pixel by setting the chrominance components of that pixel value in the luminance-chrominance color space substantially equal to zero.
 - 8. The method of claim 1, wherein the color space of the output device is CMYK space.
 - 9. The method of claim 1, wherein the color space of the output device is CMY space.
- 30 10. The method of claim 1, wherein the color space of the output device is RGB space.
 - 11. The method of claim 1, wherein the first and second thresholds are equal.
 - 12. A computer-readable medium including software code that, when executed, results in:
 - a) estimation of a background lightness level in an original image;

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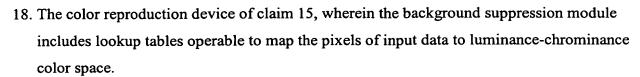
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- b) conversion of pixels in the original image to luminance-chrominance color space, wherein pixels having lightness levels substantially equal to the background lightness level are mapped as background pixels with their lightness values are set substantially equal to a value corresponding to white;
- c) comparison of chroma values for the background pixels to a threshold;
- d) adjustment of the lightness level for any background pixels having chroma values above the threshold to a new lightness level, producing lightness adjusted pixels;
- e) removal of chroma from any background pixels having chroma values below the threshold, producing color adjusted pixels; and
- f) conversion to an output space, wherein conversion is performed on all pixels including any lightness adjusted pixels and color adjusted pixels.
- 13. The computer-readable medium of claim 12, wherein the computer-readable medium is a file downloadable into a color reproduction device.
- 14. The computer-readable medium of claim 12, wherein the computer-readable medium is firmware in a processor for a color reproduction device.
- 15. A color reproduction device, comprising:
 - a) a scanning module operable to scan a color original and produce input data representative of the color original;
 - b) a background suppression module operable to:
 - i) determine a background lightness level; and
 - ii) map pixels of input data to luminance-chrominance color space such that pixels having a lightness level substantially equal to the background lightness level are mapped as background pixels having a lightness value corresponding to white;
 - c) a chroma adjustment module, operable to:
 - i) determine if chroma values for the background pixels are above a threshold;
 - ii) adjust any background pixels having a chroma value above the threshold to a lightness level different from the lightness corresponding to white; and
 - iii) remove chroma from any background pixels having a chroma value below the threshold; and
 - d) an output conversion module, operable to convert all pixels in the luminancechrominance color space to an output space.
- 16. The color reproduction device of claim 15, wherein the device is a copier.
- 17. The color reproduction device of claim 15, wherein the device is a fax machine.

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19. The color reproduction device of claim 18, wherein the lookup tables are only used on pixels with values other than the value corresponding to white.